

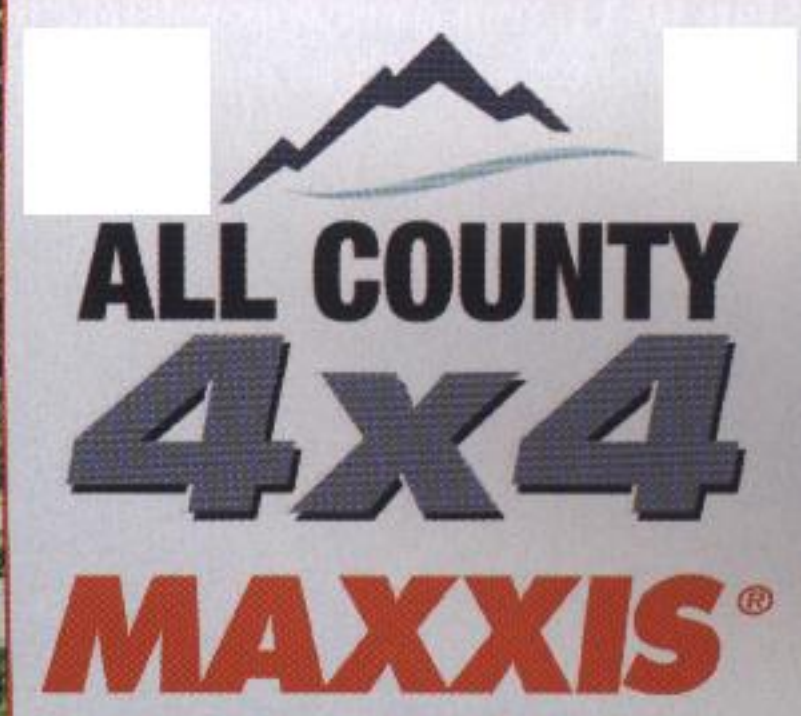
ROADBOOK

SOUTH-EAST KENT

Exploring the garden of England

With Britain's landscape still wringing wet from the winter floods when we put together this copy of the magazine, we thought long and hard before reaching the conclusion that setting out a new roadbook would be a less than responsible thing to do. Instead, having promised you a route in Kent in last month's issue, we've dipped into the archives to create a new roadbook from bits of three old ones dating from as far back as 2003. Exploring the rolling farmland and leafy woods around what used to be the Kent Coalfield, this is a route that includes no small amount of very tight, scratchy trails – the terrain is mainly quite easy, but this one's only for drivers who don't mind getting a few scratches in their vehicle's paintwork...





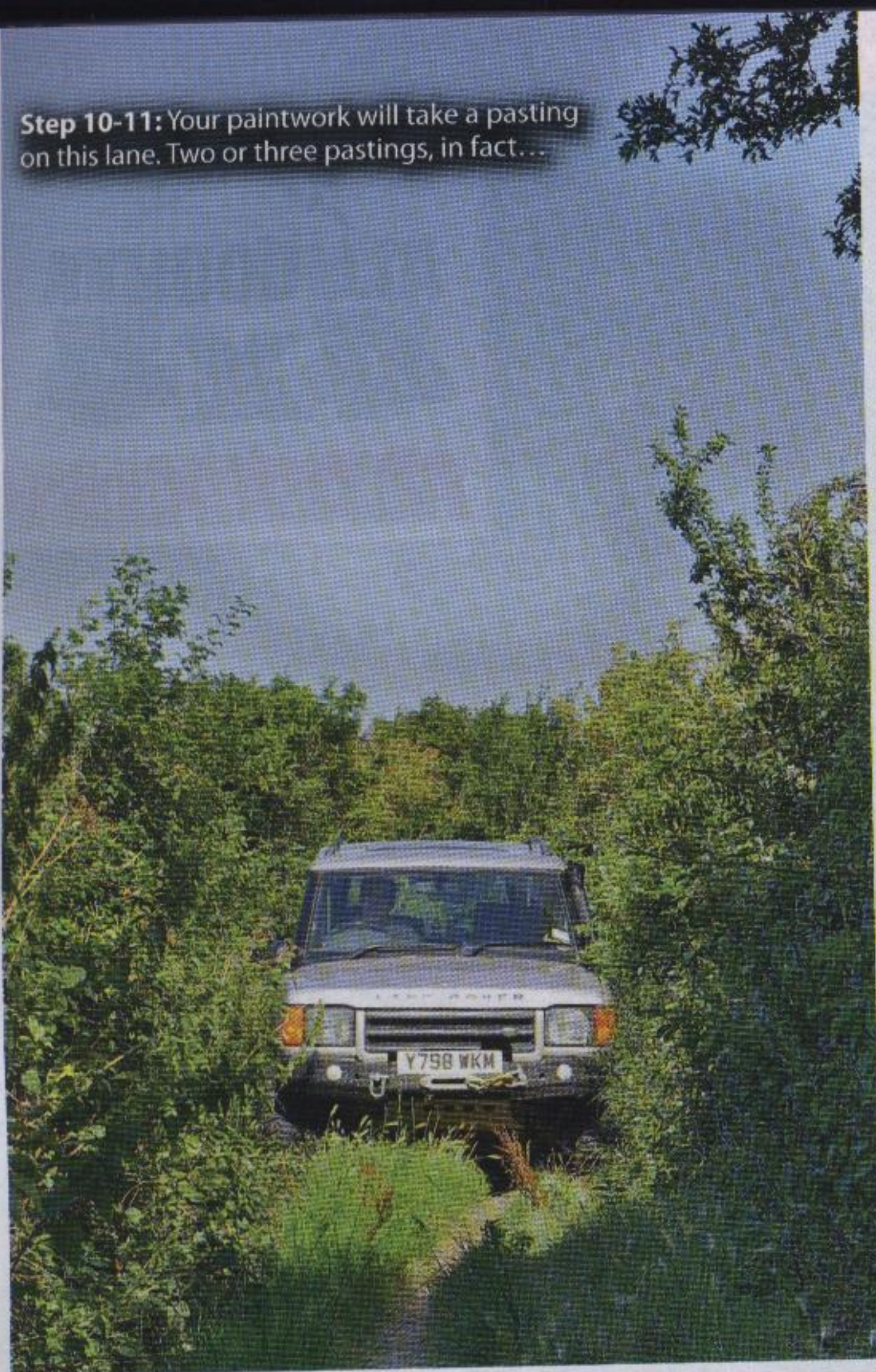
ROUTE GUIDE

START	Chillenden (TR 271 536)
FINISH	Denton (TR 216 473)
HOW LONG?	32.4 miles / 4-5 hours
TERRAIN	Chalk hillsides, woods and farmland
HAZARDS	Scratching and possible panel damage Slippery ground when wet; some ruts
OS MAPS	Landranger 179 (Canterbury & East Kent)

IS IT SUITABLE?

TYRES	Road tyres will struggle in places when wet
WEATHER	Avoid after very heavy rain
LOW BOX	Useful in place
SOFT-ROADERS	Mainly suitable with care
SCRATCHING	Inevitable in several places
DRIVING	Tight tracks need great care
DAMAGE	Encroaching trees are avoidable but could do panel damage

Step 10-11: Your paintwork will take a pasting on this lane. Two or three pastings, in fact...



3 0.85		TR 259 538
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4 1.25		Continue ahead on a smaller track
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5 1.55		
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6 1.75		
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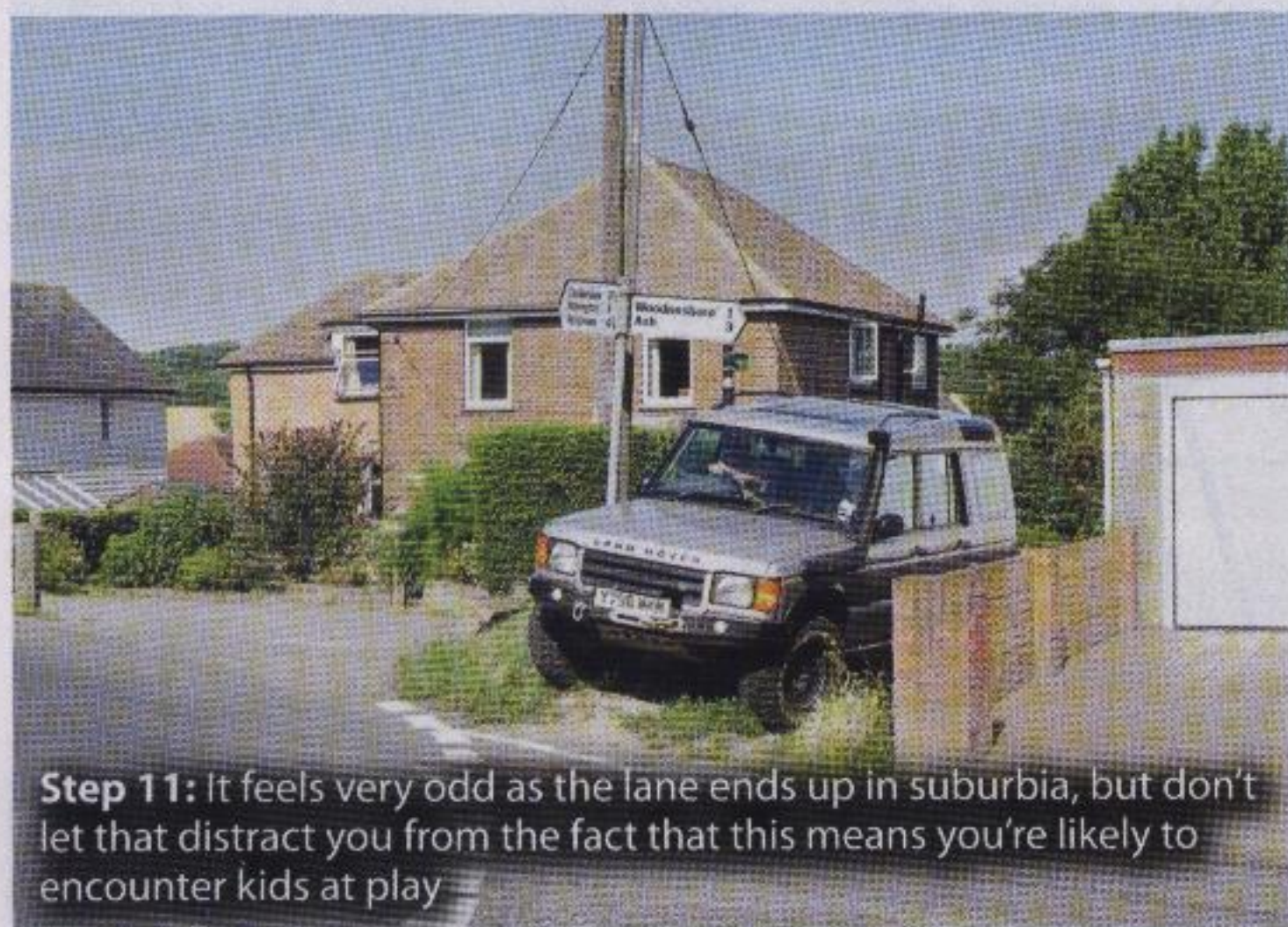
1 0.0		TR 271 536 Start at the Griffins Head in Chillenden, a couple of hundred yards south-east from the junction of Short Street and Griffin Hill. Zero your trip with the pub on your left and head more or less north-west, keeping your speed and revs right down all the way through the village
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2 0.25		
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7 3.55		TR 285 552 Immediately after the building on the right, take the grass track along the field edge
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8 3.65		Where the track splits, the right of way appears to run between the trees, though most 4x4s seem to have taken the field edge instead
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Step 11: It feels very odd as the lane ends up in suburbia, but don't let that distract you from the fact that this means you're likely to encounter kids at play

9

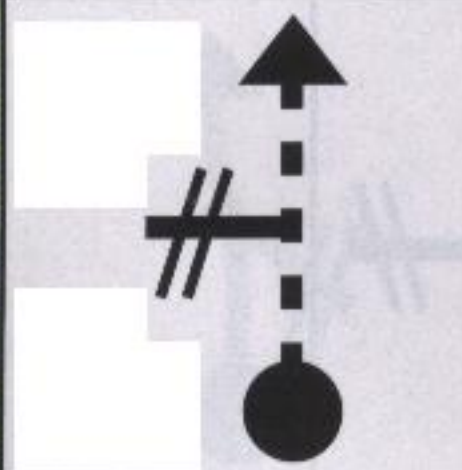
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After the tracks rejoin, the way ahead looks very narrow. It's okay, but you do need to scrape the left of your vehicle along the undergrowth to stay out of the field

10

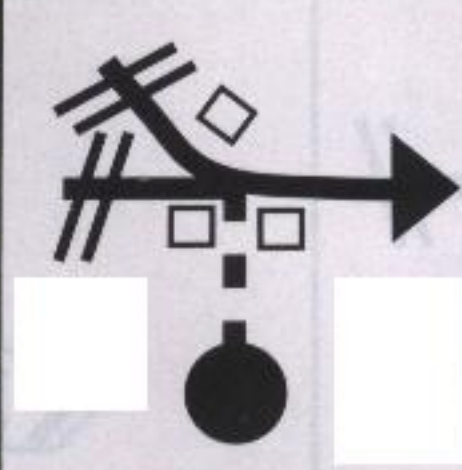
3.85



Beyond this, as the track runs between hedges marking a field border, your paintwork will take a proper battering

11

4.75



Caution - watch out for kids playing as you climb a short hill to emerge between houses and into suburbia

Chillenden 2½
Nonington 4
Aylesham 4¾

12

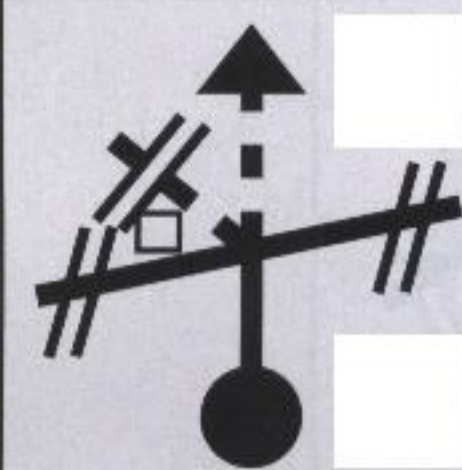
4.8



THORNTON LANE

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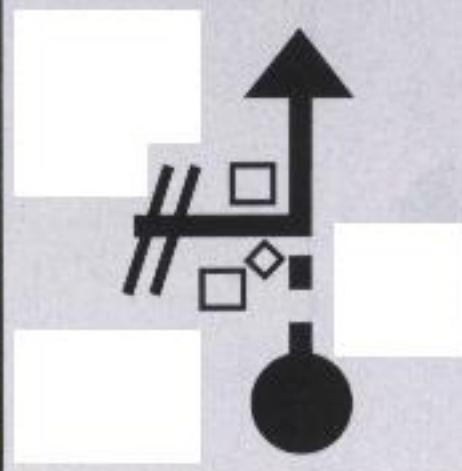
6.45



TR 288 523

14

7.65



Once more, you're in among houses

ROMAN WAY

USING OUR ROADBOOKS

Total Off-Road's unique roadbooks guide you through the British countryside on a mixture of surfaced and unsurfaced roads. The tracks we use are public rights of way, either Byways Open to All Traffic or Unclassified County Roads, all of them commonly referred to as green lanes.

NAVIGATION

We've deliberately made it as easy as possible to follow the route, using a mixture of instructions, tulip diagrams and grid references. We normally only include junctions at which you have to make a turning or don't have right of way, so just stay on the main road or take the most straight-ahead option unless we tell you otherwise.

If you're unfamiliar with six-figure grid references, you'll find a guide to using them on the legend of any OS map. Our aim is for you to be able to do the route without maps, but we do recommend having them.

SAFETY

The symbols on the first page of the roadbook advise you of how suitable it is for your vehicle. These are just guidelines, however. We'll warn you of any hazards or difficult sections, but the nature of any green lane can change quickly. Wet weather can make a huge difference to the conditions underfoot, and what's wide open in winter can be tightly enclosed and scratchy in summer. The responsibility is yours!

Our roadbooks are designed to be safe to drive in a solo vehicle, and are largely suitable for standard 4x4s on road tyres. We do recommend travelling in tandem wherever possible, however. The risk of getting stuck can be greater than it appears - and if you break down, having help at hand can make the difference between it being inconvenient and downright dangerous.

RESPONSIBILITY

Irresponsible driving is a massive problem on green lanes. In particular, you must always stay on the right of way. Never drive off it to play on the verges or surrounding land, even if you can see that someone else has; doing so is illegal and can be tremendously damaging, both to the land and to 4x4 drivers' reputation.

The fact that you can see where it's happened shows how much harm it does. It's no excuse to say you're just following where another driver has already been. Most green laners have taken to videoing anyone they see behaving like this and passing the evidence to the police, which shows how much anger there is towards the criminal element.

Elsewhere, simple common sense and courtesy should be your watchword. The do-and-don't list below should always be in your mind, but keep your speed down, be ready to pull over for others and make it your aim to show the world that 4x4 drivers aren't the hooligans they think we are.

ANTIS

Anti-4x4 bigotry does exist, but it's less common than you'd think. By and large, it's limited to organisations who just want to get the countryside all to themselves.

These organisations are beyond being reasoned with, but it's rare to encounter real hostility even from their rank-and-file members. If you're friendly towards the people with whom you share the countryside, the vast majority will respond in kind. There are always bad apples, but no more so than anywhere else.

Likewise, most local residents will accept your presence if you're driving sensibly. What suspicion you do encounter is likely to be from people worried that you're there to steal from them, so be ready to offer a word of reassurance. Once satisfied that you're not after their quad bikes, their mood will lighten.

It only takes one vandal to tarnish a person's view of all 4x4 drivers, and once the damage is done it tends to be permanent. But if enough of us resolve to be ambassadors, it might make a difference to the way we're perceived by society in general.

DO'S & DON'TS

- Keep your speed right down
- Pull over to let walkers, bikers and horse riders pass.
- Don't travel in large convoys: split into smaller groups to avoid hassling others
- Leave gates as you found them
- Don't drop litter
- Don't go back to drive the fun bits, such as mud or fords, again
- Scrupulously obey all closure and voluntary restraint notices
- Don't cause a noise nuisance, particularly after dark
- Ensure you have a right to be there. We research the routes on our roadbooks very carefully, but the status of any route can change without notice
- Be prepared to turn back if the route is blocked, even illegally
- If you find an illegal obstruction, notify the local authority
- If someone challenges you, be firm but polite. Stay calm and don't get into a slagging match
- Stick absolutely scrupulously to the right of way
- You have as much of a right to be there as everyone else. Which of course means they have as much right as you



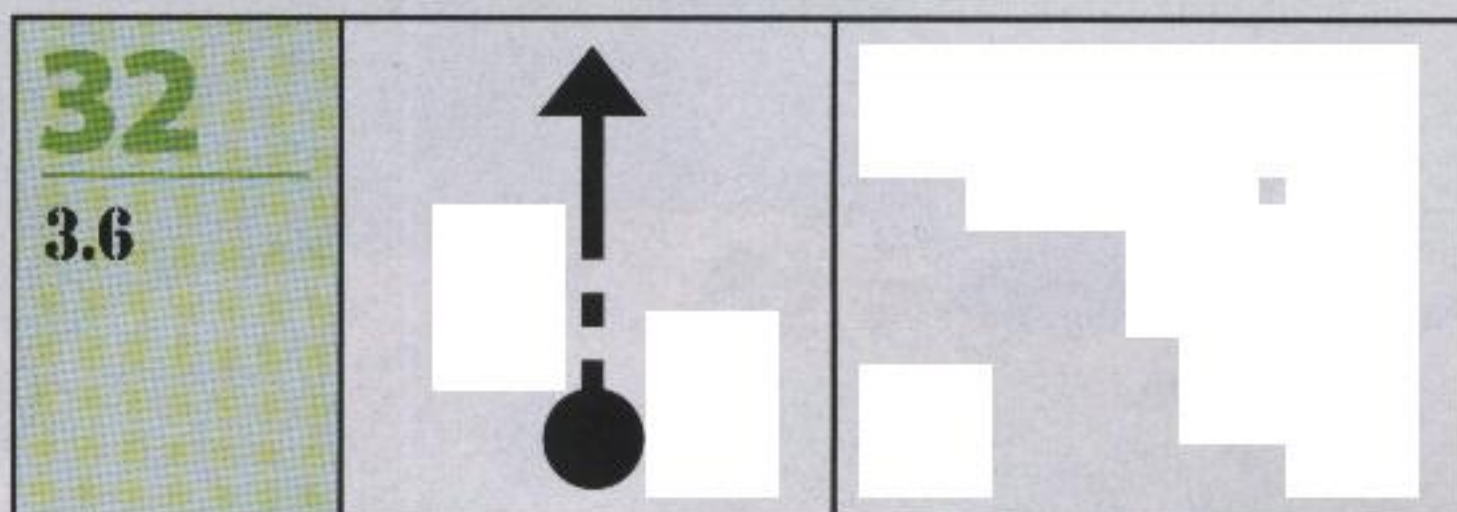
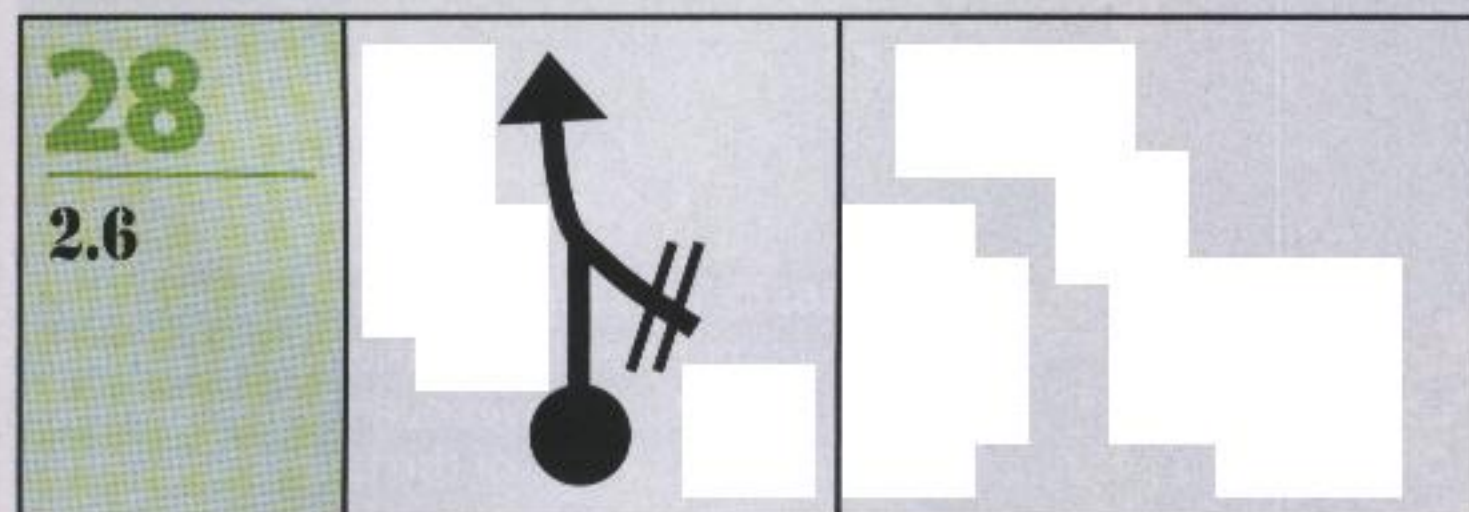
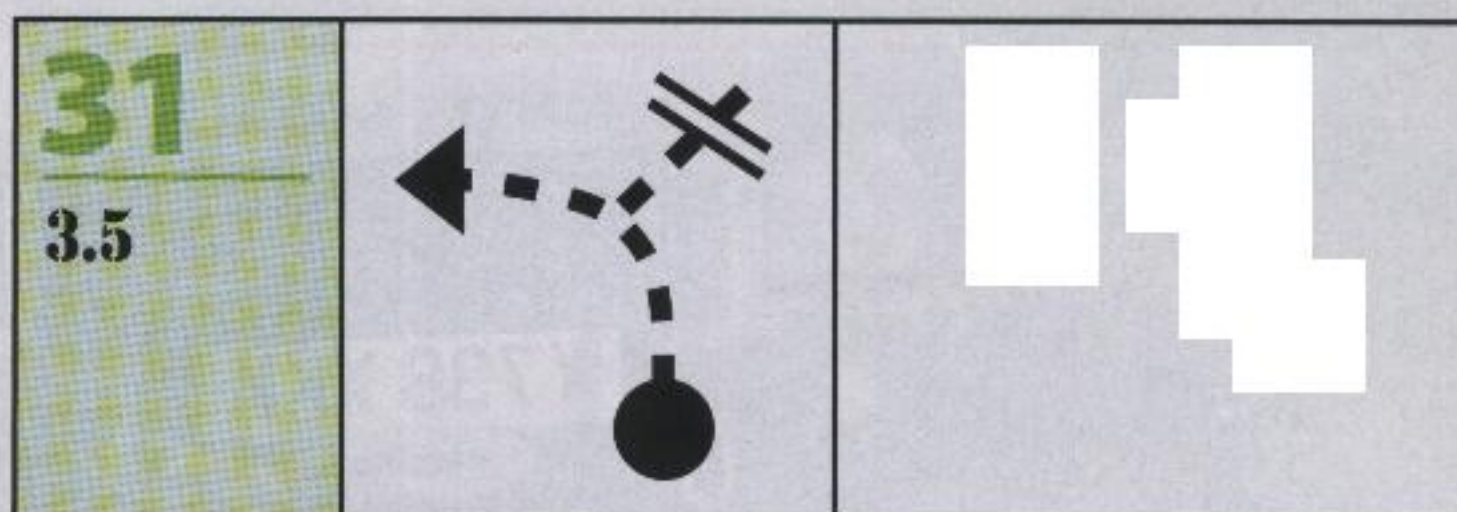
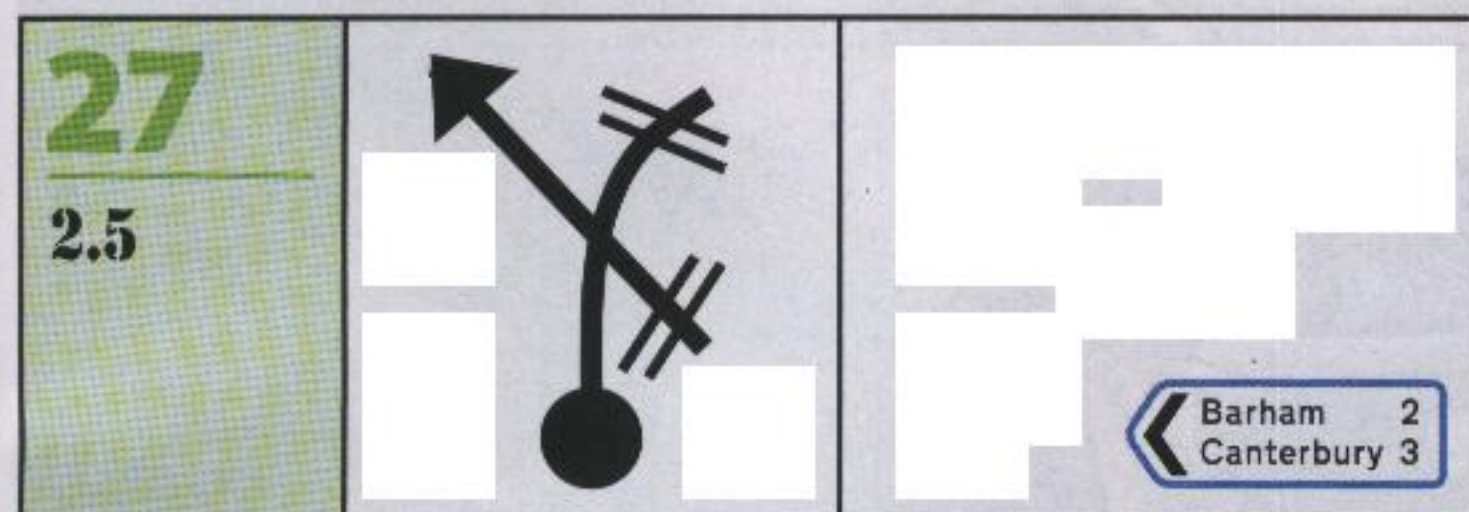
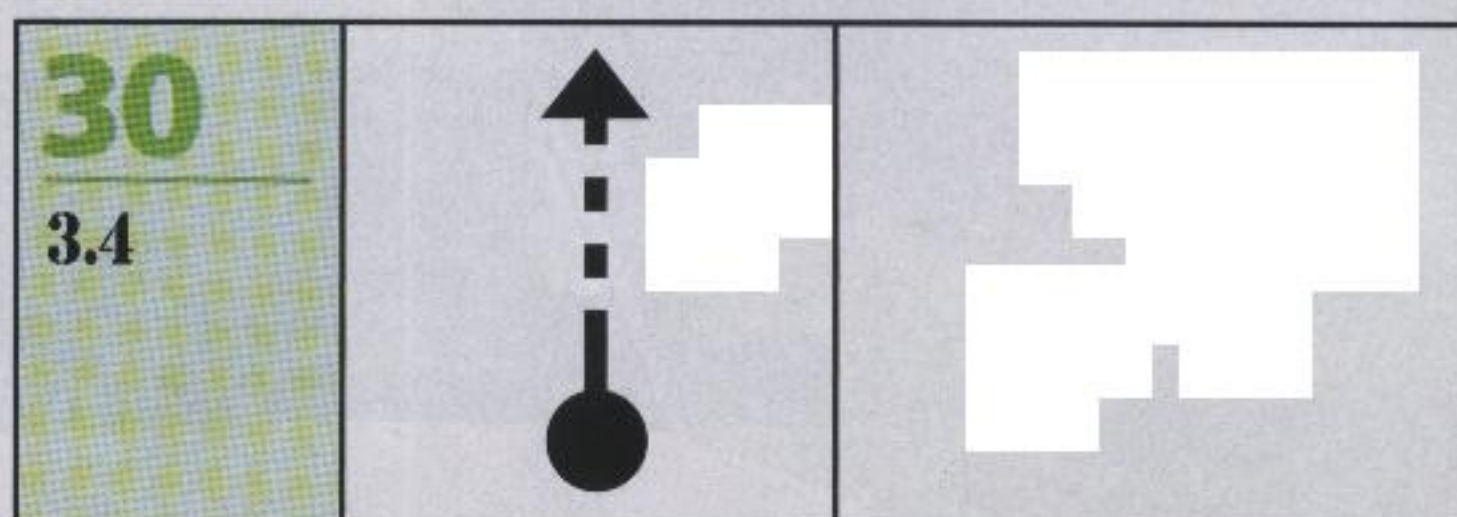
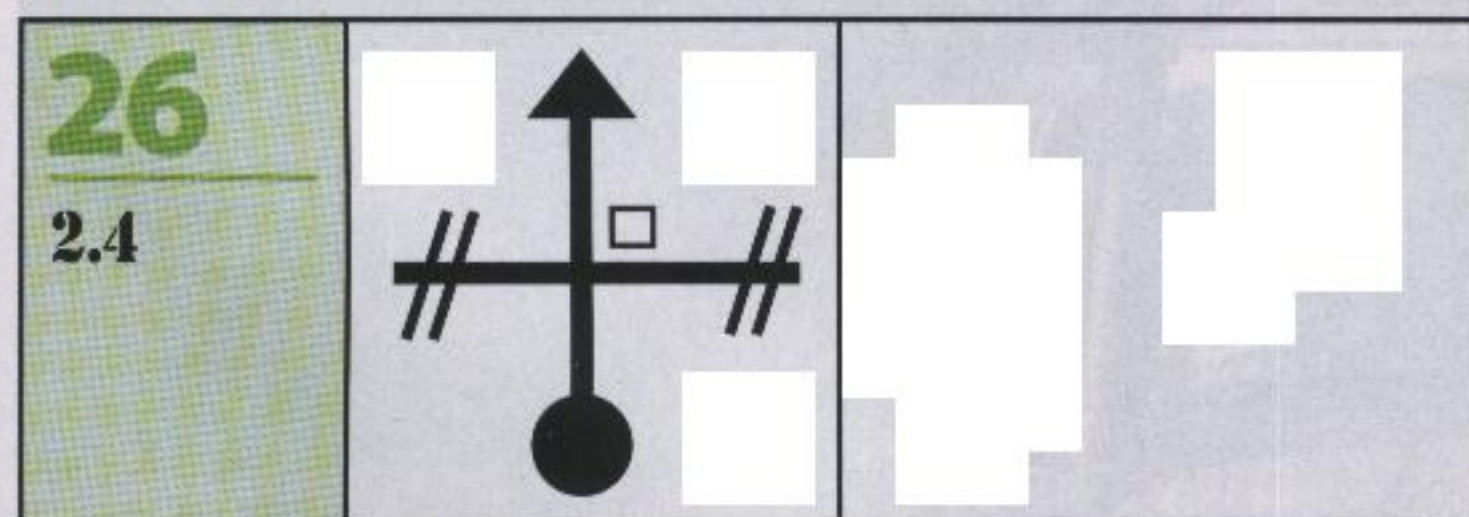
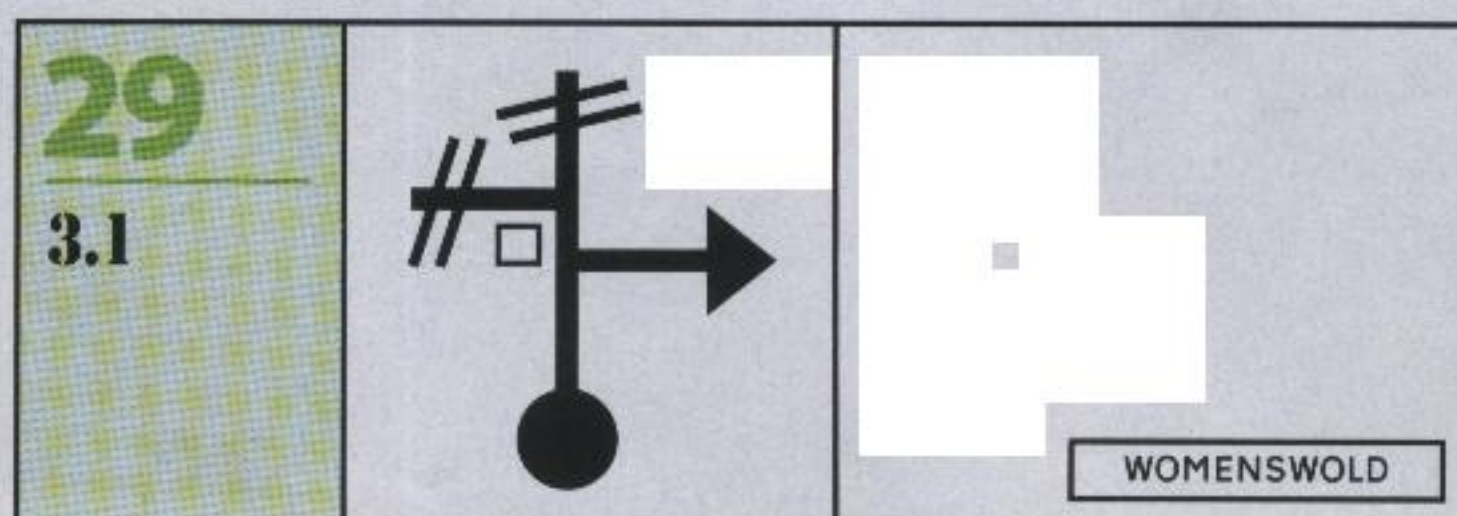
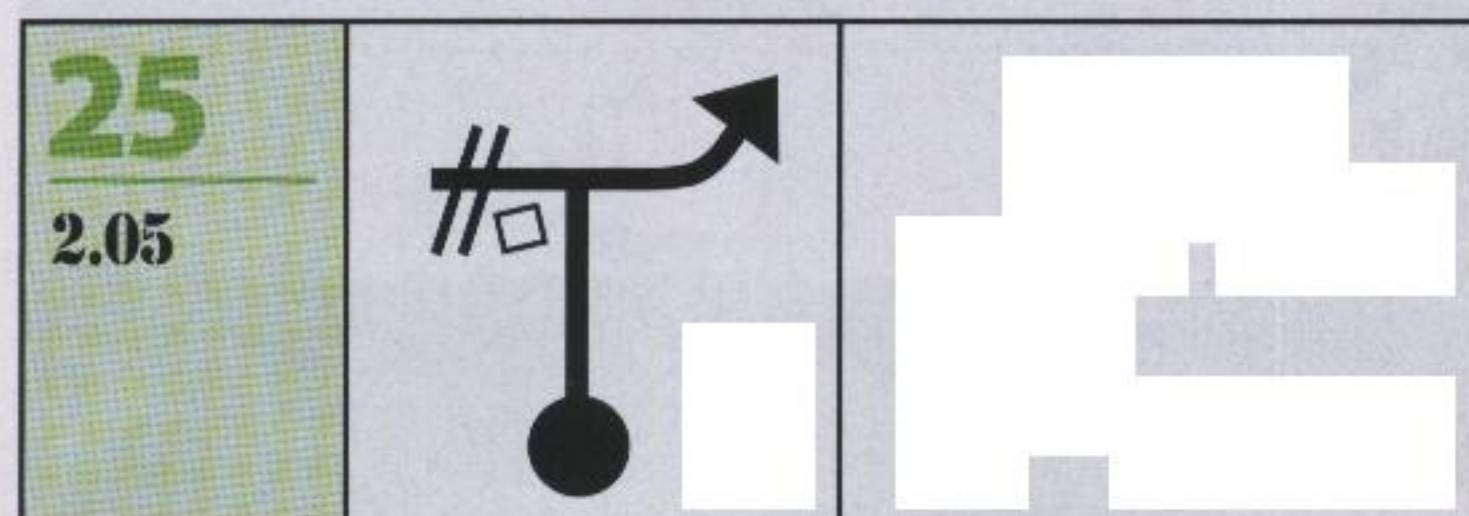
Step 16: The entrance to the lane has been landscaped to prevent vehicles from straying on to the green next to it

15 7.8		
16 7.85		<p>TR 275 505 Leave the road by the byway sign and keep the sectioned-off area of grass to your left</p>
17 8.15		<p>TR 274 501</p>
18 8.95		
19 9.05		<p>ZERO TRIP</p>
20 0.2		<p>LONG LANE</p>
21 0.75		<p>Shepherdswell 2 Coldred 4</p>
22 0.8		<p>TR 253 492 Turn right straight after the railway bridge – it's the same one you crossed in Step 30, so ignore what your trip says. Immediately after turning, follow the track as it heads off left along the hedge line, over a mild axle-twister</p>



23 1.6		
24 2.0		

TOTAL OFF-ROAD



Step 33-34: Local authority signs will warn you that this lane is being monitored for illegal usage. That includes speeding, and quite right too: after a spell of dry weather, we put up this much dust at about 10mph



Step 36: It's only for a couple of car lengths, but the junction is right at the valley bottom and tends to stay wet even when the rest of the lane is bone dry

33 3.7		TR 225 513 Caution – you're crossing two T-junctions in one, and they're both pretty busy roads		37 5.5			
34 4.2				38 6.2			
35 4.5				39 6.9			
36 4.7		Follow the track to hug the field edge. Water gathers here and it's very prone to flooding, so you'll encounter ruts		40 7.2			

41 7.8		
42 9.0		Burstead Manor 1 Upper Hardres 1 ³ ₄
43 9.5		TR 170 509
44 9.6		Follow the track ahead along the line of telegraph poles with the woods to your right
45 10.0		ZERO TRIP
46 0.2		Don't trust this sign – it's loose, and prone to rotating in the wind like a weather vane! Bossingham 2 ¹ ₂ Stelling Minnis 4
47 0.9		
48 1.5		
49 1.7		TR 180 496 Caution as you climb the hill – there are sleepers in the track which create steps
50 2.1		





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6.4



The main track swings left and upwards; you follow the red waymarker on to a faint grass track leading along the left-hand field edge

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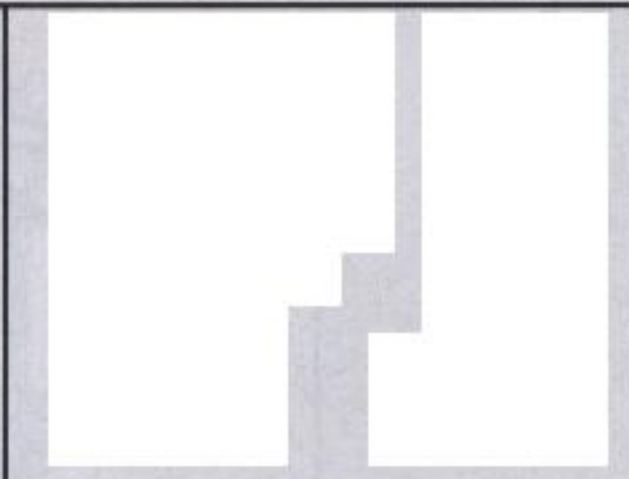
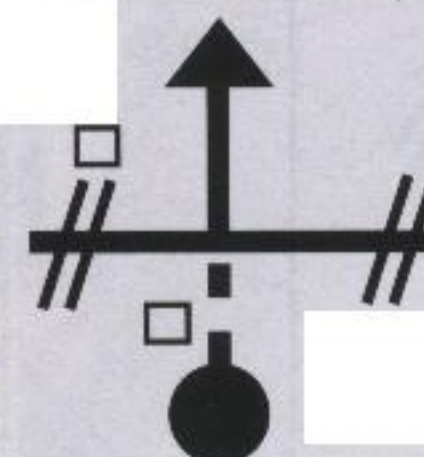
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Follow through the gate then keep the tree line to your right. Look for red and blue tape on the gateposts

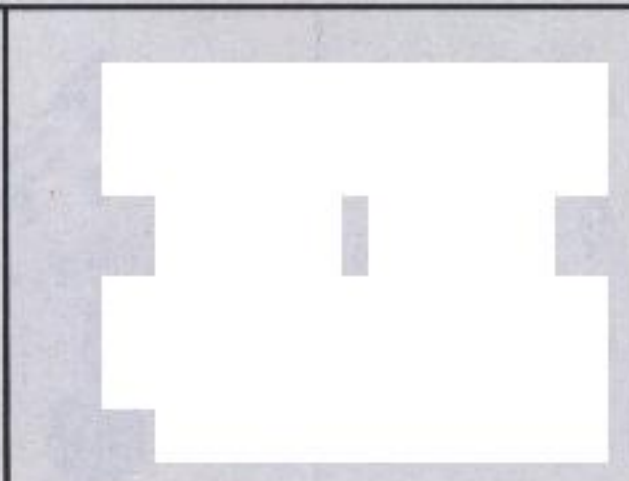
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6.85



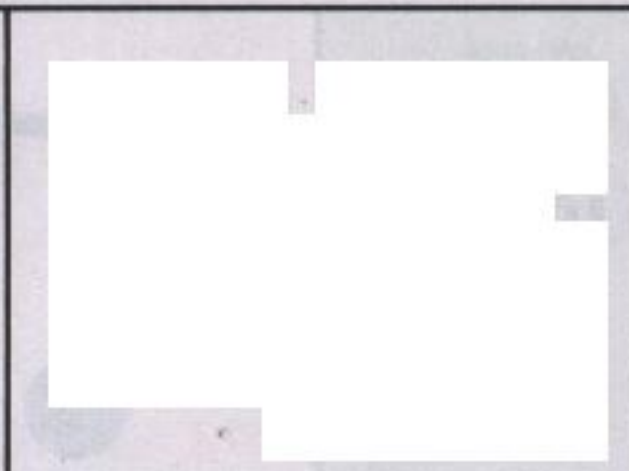
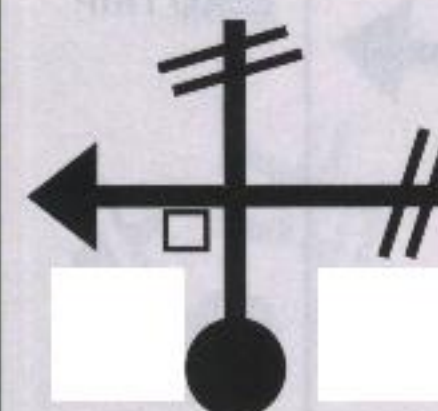
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7.1



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8.15



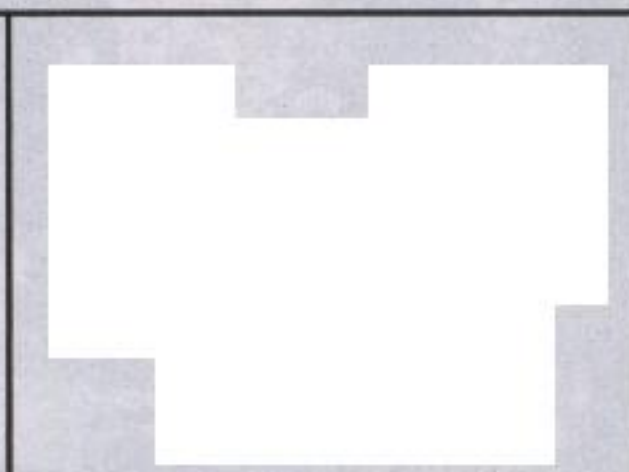
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8.6



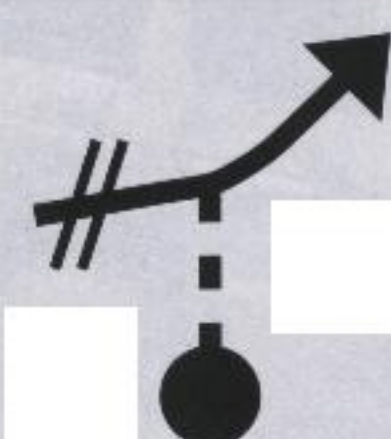
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8.65



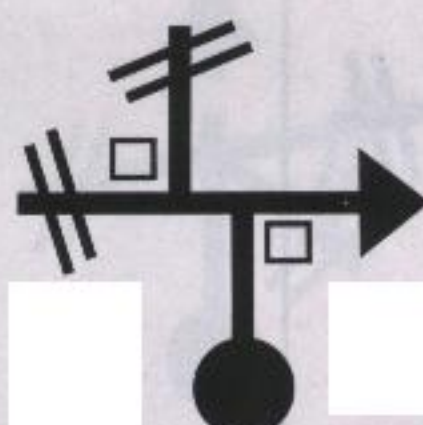
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3.9



VALLEY ROAD

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6.0



TR 192 471

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6.1



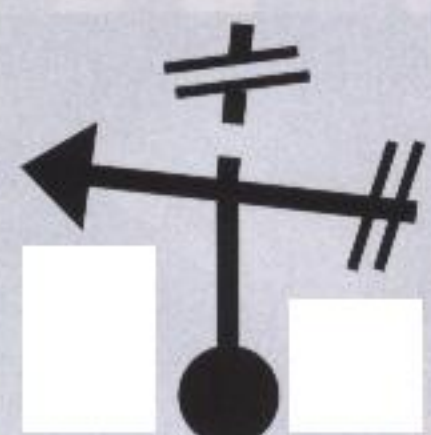
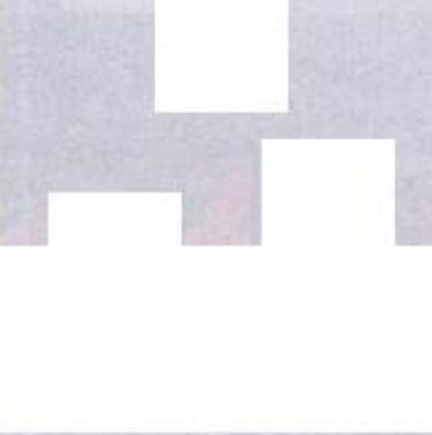



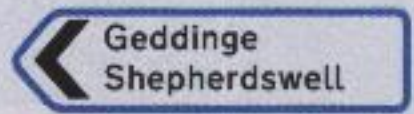
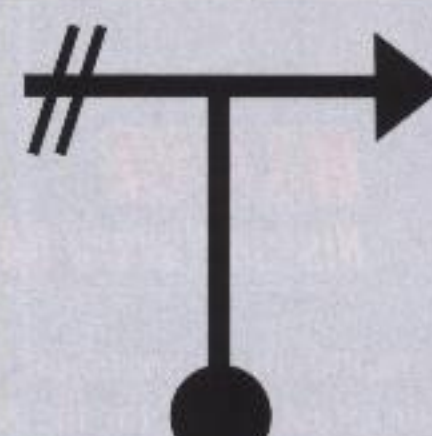
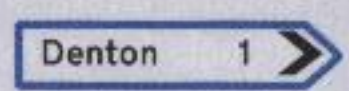
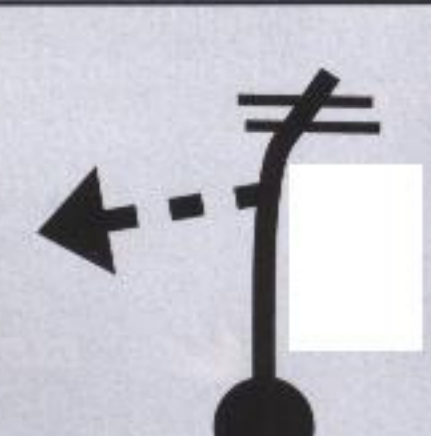
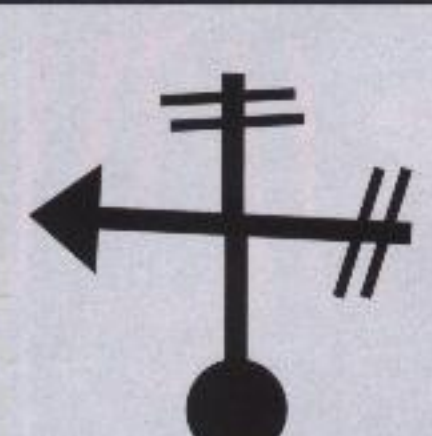
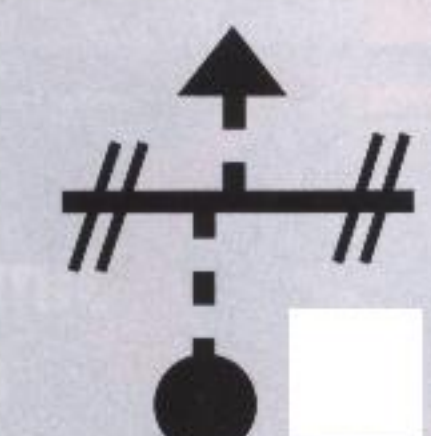

Immediately after the road becomes a track, take care not to fork right into Thomas Acre Farm

54

6.3



Join a bigger track and follow ahead through the gate

63 10.5			68 12.8		The track is very tight for much of its length, and there's a hefty tree stump to ease your way over at this point
64 10.7		Turn right immediately after the building and before the 30mph signs at the start of Denton	69 13.0		
65 11.35			70 13.45		
66 12.2		Turn left, slightly back on yourself, to take the track running along the hedge line. As you follow the edge of the field, the famous Lydden Hill rallycross circuit is to your right	71 13.9		Caution – this is a major road
67 12.5		Caution as you emerge – visibility is rubbish in both directions	72 14.35		Take it easy on the way into Denton, then arrive at the Jackdaw Inn on your left for the end of the route

